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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 292  
By Ridgeway

A RESOLUTION To honor and commend Merle Kilgore for his success in the music industry both as an entertainer and businessman.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should salute those noteworthy individuals who, through their creative abilities and business acumen, have achieved great success and distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Merle Kilgore, accomplished singer, songwriter, actor, and businessman, is one such Tennessean deserving of recognition and acknowledgment; and

WHEREAS, Voted by his peers as the Country Music Association's (CMA) first Manager of the Year in 1990, Mr. Kilgore began his career in the country music industry in Shreveport, Louisiana, at the tender age of 14, carrying Hank Williams, Sr.'s guitar; and

WHEREAS, Entering professional show business at 18, he wrote his first major hit, "More and More," which became a million seller for Webb Pierce in 1954 and occupied the number one spot on the country music charts for 10 weeks; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Kilgore followed up the success of his first hit song with "Wolverton Mountain," a 10 million seller, recorded by Claude King, which spent nine weeks at number one, and "Ring of Fire," which he co-wrote with June Carter-Cash, as recorded by Johnny Cash, a hit song which sold more than 16 million records and stayed at number one for seven weeks; and

WHEREAS, The success of those three hit songs, which spent a total of 26 weeks at the top of the country charts, combined with a catalogue of more than 300 songs he has written, ensured Merle Kilgore's induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, As an actor, Merle Kilgore has been featured in the box-office hits *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Robert Altman's *Nashville*, *W.W. and the Dixie Dance Kings*, *Roadie*, and the CBS-TV movie *Willa*; his biggest role to date co-starred him in NBC-Telecom's *Living Proof*, the life story of Hank Williams, Jr., in which Mr. Kilgore played himself; and

WHEREAS, In 1969, Merle Kilgore became general manager of Hank Williams Jr.'s music publishing companies and, on April 7, 1986, he was named Executive Vice President and head of management of Hank Williams, Jr. Enterprises; and

WHEREAS, As Vice President of the CMA, Mr. Kilgore has achieved a position of prominence in the country music community; since 1989, he has served on the CMA Board of Directors; in addition, he has served as President of both the Nashville Songwriter's Foundation and the Nashville Songwriter's Association International (NSAI); and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Mr. Kilgore was named an honorary State Senator for Tennessee; in 1998, he received the Legendary Songwriter's Award from the North American Country Music Association; and

WHEREAS, Most recently, Merle Kilgore hosted and performed at NSAI's 2001 Tin Pan South Legendary Songwriters Acoustic Concert and was presented a prestigious award honoring him as "One of the World's Outstanding Songwriters"; and

WHEREAS, A long-time member of the Academy of Country Music and an active member of the Screen Actors Guild, Mr. Kilgore is a board member of the Hank Williams Museum and the Tex Ritter Museum; and

WHEREAS, He also directs the operations of two offices, Hank Williams, Jr. Enterprises in Paris, Tennessee and Merle Kilgore Management in Nashville, where he manages several other artists; Mr. Kilgore now lives in Paris, Tennessee, just a short distance from the Hank Williams, Jr. Enterprises Office; and

WHEREAS, Having enjoyed tremendous success and the utmost distinction in all of his endeavors, Merle Kilgore is an embodiment of the spirit and commitment to excellence that is inherent in a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, This General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Kilgore for his substantial accomplishments; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we recognize and honor Merle Kilgore for his contributions to Nashville's country music industry and congratulate him on his success both as an artist and businessman within the country music community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.